AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A process for the removal of water from a mixture comprising water and zinc chloride, which comprises

adding to said mixture comprising water and zinc chloride an aprotic, polar diluent

whose boiling point in the case where an azeotrope is not formed between said diluent and water under the pressure conditions of the distillation mentioned below is higher than the boiling point of water and which is in liquid form at this boiling point of water

or

which forms an azeotrope or heteroazeotrope with water under the pressure and temperature conditions of the distillation mentioned below,

and

distilling the mixture comprising water, zinc chloride and the diluent with removal of water or said azeotrope or said heteroazeotrope from this mixture, giving an anhydrous mixture comprising zinc chloride and said diluent, wherein the aprotic, polar diluent employed is an aliphatic, olefinically unsaturated nitrile selected from the group consisting of 2-cis-pentenenitrile, 2-trans-pentenenitrile, 3-cis-pentenenitrile, 3-trans-pentenenitrile, 4-pentenenitrile, E-2-methyl-2-butenenitrile, Z-2-methyl-2-butenenitrile, 2-methyl-3-butenenitrile or a mixture thereof.

2. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the diluent is able to form an azeotrope or heteroazeotrope with water under the distillation conditions.

3. (Currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 1, ~~in either of claims 1 and 2,~~ wherein the mixture comprising water and zinc chloride has a pH of less than 7.

4. (Currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 1, ~~in any one of claims 1 to 3,~~ wherein the mixture comprising water and zinc chloride has a pH in the range from 0 to less than 7.

5. (Currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 1, ~~in any one of claims 1 to 4,~~ wherein an acid is added to the mixture comprising water and zinc chloride.

6. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 5, wherein the acid employed is HCl.

7. (New) A process as claimed in claim 2, wherein the mixture comprising water and zinc chloride has a pH of less than 7.

8. (New) A process as claimed in claim 7, wherein the mixture comprising water and zinc chloride has a pH in the range from 0 to less than 7.

9. (New) A process as claimed in claim 8, wherein an acid is added to the mixture comprising water and zinc chloride.

10. (New) A process as claimed in claim 9, wherein the acid employed is HCl.

11. (New) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein a proportion of zinc chloride, based on the total weight of zinc chloride and water, in the region is at least 0.01% by weight.

12. (New) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein a proportion of zinc chloride, based on the total weight of zinc chloride and water, in the region is at least 0.1% by weight up to 60% by weight.

13. (New) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein a proportion of zinc chloride, based on the total weight of zinc chloride and water, in the region is at least 0.5% by weight up to 30% by weight.